

HEADACHES

Arizona Department of Corrections
Health Services Bureau

Inmate Wellness Program
HEP 1044 - Revised 08/08

Almost everyone has had a headache at one time or another. The most common headaches fall into two types: tension or migraine. However, it is common for someone to experience a combination of these headaches.

TENSION HEADACHE

A tension headache is often described as a tight feeling, as if the head were in a vise. Soreness in the shoulders or neck is common. These headaches can last minutes to days and may occur daily in some sufferers.



MIGRAINE HEADACHE

A typical migraine attack produces throbbing pain on one side of the head, often accompanied by nausea. Other symptoms may include vomiting, blurry vision, seeing sparkling lights in one or both eyes, and facial tingling or numbness. If untreated, attacks usually last from 4 to 72 hours.

OTHER CAUSES OF HEADACHES

Although about 90% of the people seeking help for headaches have one of the above type of headaches, there are many other causes of headaches. Some of the most common causes include:

- dehydration
- stress
- sinus pressure/allergies
- dental problems
- eating or drinking something cold
- being sick

Try the following ways to reduce headaches:

- Try to relax.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Eat a healthy, balanced diet.
- Exercise regularly.
- Practice good posture (not slouching).
- Get plenty of sleep.
- Keep a headache diary to record "triggers" or things that cause you to get a headache. These may include certain foods or drinks, bright lights, or noises. Use this diary to identify and then avoid these triggers.
- Stretch your muscles regularly if you are doing something that requires you to stay in the same position for a long time.
- Practice relaxation techniques*.

Ways to Stop Headaches or to reduce the pain of a headache, try:

- Applying a warm or cool compress to the area that hurts.
- Gently massage the area that hurts.
- Practice relaxation techniques*.
- Over-the-counter medicine is available in the inmate store. Make sure to follow the directions carefully.

**** Information on relaxation techniques is available through the Inmate Information Sheet Binders in the library or from the health unit.***